(b) whether the former Civil Aviation Secretary and member of Naresh Chandra Committee has drawn up an action plan to decongest the skies by at least 20-30 per cent at both airports; and

(c) if so, how many recommendations of the Committee has been implemented or are under implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The Roy Paul Committee on "Air Traffic Management Capacity" has recommended Action Plan, which *inter alia* include shifting of Indian Airforce (IAF) operations out of Palm to Hindon.

(b) The Roy Paul Committee has made certian suggestions to decongest the air traffic and enhance the air traffic capacity at both airports.

(c) The recommendations have been categories into short, medium and long term measures. Short term measures have been implemented. Out of eight medium term measures five implemented and three are under implementation. Most of long-term measures are under implementation.

Private airlines in international services

578. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the criteria of allowing certain private airliners to operate international flights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): As per the existing guidelines, all the Scheduled Indian carriers having continuous operations of at least 5 years in the domestic sector and having a minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft are eligible to operate on international routes.

Improvement of air services in Sikkim

579. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA :Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special scheme has been chalked out by Government to improve the air service in the North Eastern Region particularly in Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount spent or likely to be spent by Government for implementation of the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) At present, no scheduled air services are available in the State of Sikkim as there is no airport in Sikkim. However, Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd. is operating helicopter services on the Gangtok-Bagdogra-Gangtok sector. There is a proposal for construction of a greenfield airport at Pakyoing, Sikkim at an approx. cost of Rs. 340 crores. The North Eastern Council (NEC) had commissioned a feasibility study by the Foundation for Aviation and Sustainable Tourism (FAST), New Delhi for improving air connectivity and starting a regional airlines for the North Eastern Region (NER). The report submitted by FAST has been examined by a Committee under the Chairmanship of H.E. the Governor of Manipur. In its report submitted to the NEC on 31.10.2006, the Committee has recommended (i) setting up of a North-Eastern regional airline through public private parternership or (ii) provision of minimum subsidy to airlines through a Reverse Bidding Process to operate the required services in the NER. The proposal is under consideration of the NEC.

Private participation in upgradation of airports

580. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to allow private sector companies to take part in upgradation of 35 non-metro airports and this would open up numerous business opportunities to Indian companies interested in airport development;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this new idea includes permission for private sector in management of terminal like check-in-areas, security hold and passenger amenities at the non-metro airports; and

(c) if so, the other details of the new plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The city side development of the 35 Non-metro airports scheduled for upgradation would be through Public Private Parternership (PPPs).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Development of all the 35 non-metro airports are taken up simultaneously under the authority and responsibility of Airports Authority of India (AAI).